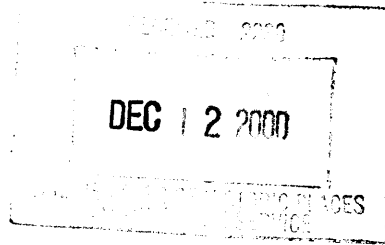


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



1669

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oatman Filling Station

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 102 Ferry Street not for publication N/A

city or town Eau Claire vicinity N/A

state Wisconsin code WI county Eau Claire code 035 zip code 54703

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia Z. Cochran
Signature of certifying official/Title
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

December 6, 2000
Date

State or federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or federal agency and bureau

Oatman Filling Station
Name of Property

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the
 National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
 National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
 removed from the National Register.
 other (explain) _____

Joe
Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall
Date of Action
1.16.01

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many as apply.)
 private
 public-local
 public-state
 public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box.)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources in the count.)

	Contributing	Noncontributing
buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)
Tudor Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)
foundation CONCRETE
walls SHINGLE
roof ASPHALT
other METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Introduction

The Oatman Filling Station was erected in 1931.¹ It is a one-story, frame building finished with wood shingles, resting on a poured concrete foundation. The steeply-pitched gable roof displays the influence of the cottage variant of the Tudor Revival style. The front (east) slope of the roof is clad with asphalt shingles, while the rear slope exhibits a standing seam, metal roof. The roof flares slightly and is accented with exposed rafters.

Description

The Oatman Filling Station is located on the southwest corner of Ferry and Menomonie streets in west Eau Claire. A modern convenience store and gas station occupies the southeast corner of Ferry and Menomonie streets. Single-family residences dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stand north, south, and west of the Oatman property. A small park is located across Ferry Street to the east.

The Oatman Filling Station is a small, rectangular building set in the middle of a large concrete pad. A wide driveway north of the building gives access to Menomonie Street. A second driveway to the southeast empties into Ferry Street.

The Oatman Filling Station faces east (see Photograph No. 1). A paneled wood door with a six-pane, fixed window in the upper half is centered on the east-facing (front) facade of the filling station. A wood, six-over-one, double-hung sash window appears on either side of the door.

The north-facing facade (see Photograph No. 2) displays a boarded, six-over-one window (east) and a solid wood door (west). A small sign on the door reads: "Cleanest restroom in town."

A six-over-one window is centered on the south-facing facade (see Photograph No. 3). On the west-facing (rear) facade, a short, boarded over window at the north corner marks the location of the restroom (see Photograph No. 4). A square brick chimney rises through the roof just south of the window.

The interior consists of the office and a small restroom (located in the northwest corner). Finishes include a combination of horizontal board, fiberboard, and plaster on the walls; plywood panels on the ceiling; and wood flooring. Bulbs in ceiling-mounted sockets light the interior.

Alterations

The exterior of the Oatman Filling Station is unaltered, except for the asphalt shingles covering the front slope of the metal roof. On the interior, some of the wall and ceiling finishes appear to have been changed, but the spaces are intact. Overall, the Oatman Filling Station retains excellent integrity.

¹ The filling station does not appear on the Map of Eau Claire, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1931), but is listed in Wright's Directory of Eau Claire, (Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1931).

Oatman Filling Station
Name of Property

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying
the property for the National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a
significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons
significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of
a type, period, or method of construction or represents
the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or
represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose
components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information
important in our prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious
purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved significance
within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance
1931

Significant Dates
1931

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Statement of Significance

Summary

The Oatman Filling Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C*. The Oatman Filling Station gains significance under *Criterion C* as a good example of a "house" filling station, a building type erected in great numbers between 1920 and 1935, but of which few intact examples survive. The period of significance coincides with the station's date of construction – 1931. The Oatman Filling Station also represents the sole intact pre-1940 gas station in Eau Claire, constructed to serve the growing number of automobiles in the city.

History of the city of Eau Claire

The early history of the city of Eau Claire is closely associated with the development of the lumber industry in the Chippewa Valley, earning the community its nickname, the Sawdust City. Logs were rafted down the Chippewa River beginning in 1821, and a sawmill was built at Chippewa Falls in 1838. In 1846, Stephen McCann, Jeremiah Thomas, and George and Simon Randall erected a dam and a sawmill at the junction of the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers. The sawmill was washed away by heavy rains in 1847, but the Randalls, with new partners, were able to rebuild the mill. A second dam and mill complex was built for Jesse Gage and James Reed soon afterward.²

Lumbermen, such as Daniel Shaw, Charles Bullen, Joseph G. Thorp, Orrin Ingram, Donald Kennedy, H.C. Putnam, and George Buffington set up operations near the sawmills in the 1850s. Three small settlements grew up near the sawmills, separated by the rivers. The Village of Eau Claire was located south of the Eau Claire River and west of the Chippewa River; Eau Claire City was located south of the Eau Claire River and east of the Chippewa River; and North Eau Claire was north of the Eau Claire River and east of the Chippewa River. In 1856, plats for the Village of Eau Claire and Eau Claire City were recorded, and Eau Claire County was separated from Chippewa County. The Village of Eau Claire was made county seat. In 1861, the population of the three settlements was 3,164.³

Following the Civil War, many Norwegian immigrants settled in Eau Claire, adding to an ethnic base of Germans, Irish, Canadians, and Yankees. By this time, a fourth community had developed in the area. West Eau Claire was located north of the Eau Claire River and west of the Chippewa River. When Eau Claire incorporated as a city in 1872, the new city included what had been West Eau Claire, as well as the former communities of Eau Claire, Eau Claire City, and North Eau Claire. The population in 1880 was 9,771. By 1885, the booming lumber industry had caused the population to swell to 21,668, making Eau Claire the second-largest city in Wisconsin. During the late 1880s, the lumbering industry in Eau Claire declined sharply. The city's population fell 20 percent in response, dropping to 17,415 in 1890. Eau Claire's business community moved into wood-products manufacturing, with such enterprises as the Pioneer Furniture Company (1887), the Phoenix Furniture Company (1899), the Dells Pulp and Paper

² Jane Hieb, Eau Claire, Heartland of the Chippewa Valley: An Illustrated History, (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), pp. 20-22.

³ Mary Taylor, "Final Report: Intensive Historic/Architectural Survey of the City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin." Report prepared for the City of Eau Claire, March 1983, pp. 6-7; and Lois Barland, Sawdust City, (Stevens Point, Wisconsin: Worzalla Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 12-20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Company (1894), the Linderman Box and Veneer Company (1895), and the Kaiser Lumber Company Box Factory (1905). These concerns helped stabilize Eau Claire's population.⁴

After the turn-of-the-century, the manufacturing sector expanded beyond wood-products, with the Gillette Safety Tire Company (later Uniroyal, Inc., the city's largest employer until it closed in 1992), the Northwestern Steel and Iron Works (later National Presto Industries, producing small home appliances), and other companies. In 1916, the Wisconsin State Normal School for teacher-training opened in Eau Claire. This post-secondary institution, now the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, drew students from all over west-central Wisconsin. Eau Claire's population, which had hovered around 17,500 from 1890 to 1910, began to grow again in the 1910s, reaching 20,880 in 1920. By 1940, the population had increased to 30,745. It reached 44,619 in 1970.⁵ This reflected the city's development as a regional economic and educational center for the surrounding rural counties, a role it still serves.⁶ Today the City of Eau Claire is a lively community with more than 55,000 residents and thriving institutional, commercial, and industrial sectors.

Historical Context: The Development of the Filling Station⁷

The filling station, also called the gasoline or service station, developed in the early twentieth century to provide fuel and other automobile products at a location convenient to the growing number of car owners. The filling station also became a marketing tool in the fierce competition between independent producers and the companies of the former Standard Oil Trust, which monopolized about 85 percent of the total petroleum market when it was forced to split up in 1911.

In their book, *The Gas Station In America*, John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle identify gasoline station building types over time. The earliest filling station, generally, was the "curbside" type, which appeared at the edge of the street in front of a hardware store or grocery. Developed around 1915, it consisted of pumps and underground storage tanks. This was more efficient and much less of a fire hazard than the earlier method, that of horse-drawn wagons making home deliveries, had been. Even so, fire safety and zoning ordinances enacted in larger cities during the early 1920s eliminated curbside stations in urban areas and often limited where other types of gasoline stations could be located.

The second type of filling station, which Jakle and Sculle call the "shed," was widely built during the late 1910s. The shed was utilitarian and had a dirt or gravel drive. It looked like a lumber or coal yard building. During the 1920s, oil companies began constructing gas stations in neighborhoods, where aesthetics were important and the appearance of the shed station was objectionable. In order to reduce the objections to locating service stations in neighborhoods, the "house" and "house with canopy" type of gas stations were developed.

⁴ Taylor, pp. 8-9.

⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶ Taylor, pp. 8-9; and Barland, *Sawdust City*, p. 112.

⁷ History of filling station building types from John A. Jakle and Keith Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 130-155.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

Page 3

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

As the name suggests, the house type filling station looked like a small residence, except that it had a large front window or group of windows for displaying auto products. Reflecting the popular residential architectural styles of the period, the Colonial Revival, Craftsman and the cottage variant of Tudor Revival were favored for exterior detailing of house type filling stations. The typical house station plan consisted of an office, a storage room, and public restrooms. The men's room was entered from inside the station, while the door to the women's room was on the exterior side or rear of the building. The "house with canopy" was similar to the house type, but had a canopy that extended over the pumps to shelter customers and employees in inclement weather. The canopy was formed either by extending the station's roof, or attaching the canopy to the eave of the station's roof. The Oatman Filling Station is a good example of the house type gas station, incorporating the Tudor Revival cottage styling common to the house type and including office and restroom spaces.

Many house gas stations were prefabricated, of a standardized design chosen by the oil company. The standardized house gas station quickly became a marketing tool because the public could easily identify the oil franchise by the features of its gas stations. One of the more successful examples of this was the Pure Oil chain, which erected Tudor Revival cottage stations with deep blue, tile roofs. Although the form of Pure Oil stations changed over time, each variation retained the characteristic blue tile roof.

By the mid-1920s, the "house with bays" gasoline station type had evolved. The bays were appended either to the side or the rear of the office portion of the station. At first, the bays were equipped with grease pits for lubricating and washing automobiles. By the late 1920s, air compressors with rotary lifts were installed in the bays so that repair services could be provided.

The house and, less commonly, the house with canopy and house with bays, were erected into the mid-1930s. During the Depression, gasoline sales sagged. In an effort to attract customers, oil companies expanded their product line and built a new and very different type of gasoline station building: the "oblong box." In contrast to the house type, which was intended to blend in with its surroundings, the oblong box was designed to attract attention. Drawing inspiration from the International Style, the oblong box featured a streamlined, functional, rectangular form with a flat roof, and was finished with glazed terra cotta (1930s) or porcelain enamel (1940s and 1950s). The oblong box often was painted with the oil company's trademark colors. The interior space integrated office, storage, and service bays.

Around 1960, the exterior details of the oblong box fell out of favor, viewed as garish. Elements such as cedar shakes, brick, broad eaves, wood siding, and darker colors were used to present a ranch style or Colonial Revival exterior appearance while retaining or expanding the oblong box form. During the 1970s, a new station type was introduced composed of a large canopy sheltering the pumps and a booth for the attendant. Today, the oblong box (which includes a convenience store) with a monumental, freestanding canopy is typical.

The automobile and gas station in Eau Claire

Around 1908, the first automobile arrived in Eau Claire. There were 41 cars in Eau Claire County in 1909; this figure increased to 93 by 1911. The first automobile accident in the City of Eau Claire occurred in 1910, when a car jumped the curb in front of the Eau Claire National Bank, pinning six people to the wall of the building. In 1914, a pedestrian was struck by a car, resulting in the first local automobile-related fatality. In 1915, there were 370 automobiles in the City of Eau Claire. As the popularity of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8

Page 4

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

automobiles increased, so did the demand for better roads. During the 1910s, several of the main roads in the city were paved. In 1920, the road between Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire (now U.S. Highway 53) was paved with concrete.⁸

Eau Claire's early automobile owners bought gasoline at outlets such as hardware stores, general stores, and bulk stations. The first free-standing filling station in the city was erected sometime between 1923 and 1926. By 1926, 11 filling stations were operating in Eau Claire. This number jumped to 28 by 1928. The Oatman Filling Station was erected for Frank Oatman in 1931.⁹ In 1935, the Oatman Filling Station was one of 45 gas stations in Eau Claire.¹⁰ Frank Oatman's son, Lloyd, operated the filling station for many years. Ray Best subsequently managed it for 23 years. The station was affiliated with the Texaco Company for most of its existence. From the late 1980s until closing on 10 September 1996, the Oatman station was a Sinclair affiliate.¹¹

Significance: Architecture

Under *Criterion C*, the Oatman Filling Station is significant as a good and intact example of a house type filling station. As is characteristic of this building type, the Oatman Filling Station exhibits the appearance of a small house with Tudor Revival cottage styling. The interior plan, composed of an office and small restroom entered by an exterior door, also exemplifies the house type filling station.

Surveys of Eau Claire's historic resources carried out in 1978 and 1983 identified three pre-1940 gas stations, including the Oatman Filling Station. The Standard Oil Company Filling Station at 401 North Barstow Street was erected in 1926. It was a brick, Mediterranean Revival-influenced structure with barrel tile roofs and curvilinear parapets. The Standard Oil Company Filling Station was demolished in 1986. The Cosgrove Filling Station at 361 Ferry Street dates from c. 1933. It is a house with canopy type station (see Photograph No. 5). However, the canopy has been enclosed, compromising the integrity of the structure. The Oatman Filling Station is the only surviving intact pre-1940 filling station in Eau Claire.

Conclusion

The Oatman Filling Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C* as a good example of a "house" filling station, a building type erected in great numbers between 1920 and 1935. This type of station marked the transition between the period of bulk oil retailing and rationalized corporate gasoline retailing as embodied in the "oblong box" and the corporate image gas station.

⁸ Lois Barland, The Rivers Flow On, (Stevens Point, Wisconsin: Worzalla Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 200-01.

⁹ The station does not appear on the Map of Eau Claire, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1931); but is listed in Wright's Directory of Eau Claire, (Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1931).

¹⁰ Barland, The Rivers Flow On, p. 208.

¹¹ Carol Oatman, current owner, interview 14 March 1997.

Oatman Filling Station
Name of Property

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Mrs. Carol Oatman

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1/5</u> Zone	<u>6/1/5/8/9/0</u> Easting	<u>4/9/6/1/4/3/0</u> Northing	3	<u>1</u> Zone	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Easting	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Northing
2	<u>1</u> Zone	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Easting	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Northing	4	<u>1</u> Zone	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Easting	<u>1/1/1/1</u> Northing

_____ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Specialist
organization Mead & Hunt, Inc. date June 2000
street & number 6501 Watts Road telephone (608) 273-6380
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53719-2700

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: A U.S. Geological Survey map (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description

The Oatman Filling Station is located on that part of Lot 1, Block 10 of the Daniel Shaw Lumber Company's Addition to the City of Eau Claire, that excludes the west 232.65 feet and excludes the south 90 feet of the east 100 feet and excludes that part sold to Anderson. This parcel measures 50 feet along the north boundary, 42 feet along the south boundary, 38 feet along the east boundary, 12 feet along the west boundary, and encompasses less than 1 acre.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Oatman Filling Station enclose all the resources historically associated with it, and represent lines of convenience drawn to exclude resources not associated with the filling station. These lines of convenience coincide with the north and east legal boundaries of the parcel and lie within the south and west legal boundaries of the parcel.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 11 Page 1

Oatman Filling Station
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Photographs

Photograph 1 of 5
Oatman Filling Station
City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
Photograph by Elizabeth L. Miller, Mead & Hunt, 15 February 2000
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View of the east-facing (front) facade of the filling station, looking west.

Photograph 2 of 5
View of the east- and north-facing facades of the filling station, looking southeast.

Photograph 3 of 5
View of the south- and east-facing facades of the filling station, looking northwest.

Photograph 4 of 5
View of the west-facing (rear) facade of the filling station, looking southeast.

Photograph 5 of 5
View of the c. 1933 Cosgrove Filling Station, 361 Ferry Street, a comparison property.

Oatman Filling Station
Name of Property

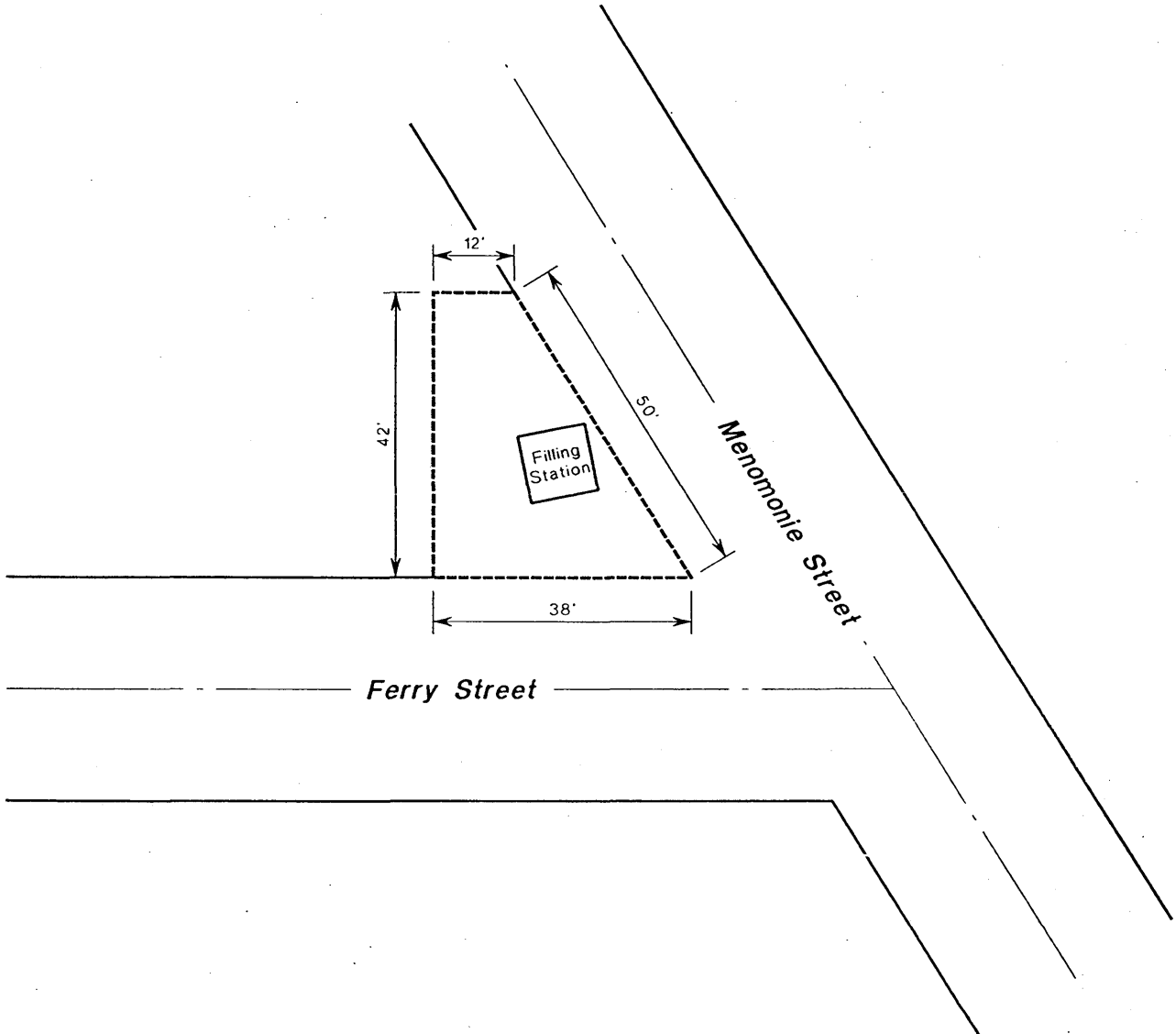
Eau Claire County, Wisconsin
County and State

Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Carol Oatman
street & number 106 Ferry Street telephone (715) 835-3823
city or town Eau Claire state WI zip code 54703

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

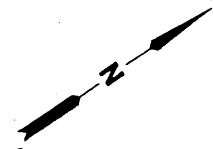


OATMAN FILLING STATION

102 Ferry Street
 City of Eau Claire
 Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Key:

-  Contributing
-  Historic Boundary



Not To Scale